



A long-standing legacy in shaping Texas fiscal policy

For Immediate Release
SEPT. 5, 2017

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TTARA releases legislative session brief on taxes and school finance

A review of the Texas Legislature's recent regular and special sessions' successes – and failures – in passing bills addressing tax, economic development and school finance issues has been compiled by the Texas Taxpayers and Research Association (TTARA). The research brief – [Wrap-Up for the 85th Legislature](#) – also discusses the issues that are likely to resurface in the Legislature in 2019.

TTARA predicts property tax reform – a major issue during the regular and special sessions – again will be among the policy debates during the 86th Legislature. TTARA will continue to advocate for real-time tax notice provisions included in those bills. In addition, the report states, expect to see “the greatest property tax evil of all – a real or de facto split tax roll, which would shift more of the tax load away from homeowners onto business.”

TTARA notes that more than 350 bills amending the Property Tax Code or making other changes to the property tax system were introduced in the regular session. Only 33 passed. TTARA provides a summary of 14 of these bills and looks at four bills of note that failed to pass.

Other tax issues reviewed by TTARA are the areas of sales tax, franchise tax, severance tax, motor fuels tax, general tax administration and unclaimed property.

In the area of school finance, TTARA notes that few of the more than 160 filed bills passed, largely because of large fiscal notes and scarce revenue. The legislative interim, TTARA envisions, “will be filled with meetings of the new Texas Commission on Public School Finance as they attempt to re-vamp the public school finance system. Newspapers will undoubtedly be filled with headlines of discussions of various new revenue sources to replace the school property tax and numerous proposed changes to the school finance formulas. Editorial boards will publish their opinions of good and bad options, and school groups will choose sides, making consensus on these issues very difficult to attain, as previous commissions have found.”

The report can be found on the TTARA website at: <http://www.ttara.org/files/document/file-59a6de4738eb3.pdf>. Hard copies of the report also are available upon request.

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The Texas Taxpayers and Research Association (TTARA) is a non-profit, non-partisan membership-supported organization of businesses and individuals interested in state and local fiscal policies in Texas and the way those policies impact our economy. TTARA members operate in every part of Texas; they employ and provide incomes to thousands of Texans; they produce or provide every type of good or service Texans consume; and, they provide a major portion of the revenue that supports public services at every level of government. TTARA has been recognized as the state's leading organization specializing in tax and fiscal policy for more than 50 years. The organization's annual meeting, held in the fall each year, features top elected leaders and government officials discussing current tax, expenditure, and other public policy issues.

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